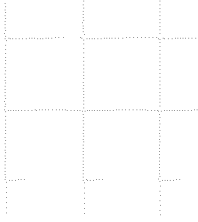


**To:** Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]  
**From:** Grantham, Nancy  
**Sent:** Mon 8/24/2015 5:03:08 PM  
**Subject:** FW: AP query-deadline Monday Aug. 24



Keeping you looped in on this issue

**From:** Fonseca, Felicia [mailto:ffonseca@ap.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2015 12:50 PM  
**To:** Harris-Bishop, Rusty  
**Cc:** Press  
**Subject:** AP query-deadline Monday Aug. 24

Thanks Rusty, I hadn't received a response on this yet.

I do other questions that relate to water deliveries on Navajo. I'm on deadline today.

Has the EPA stopped delivering water to the Navajo Nation as the agency indicated it would last week? If not, what remains as far as water resources and where are those resources placed?

The Navajo Nation said today it will not lift its advisory against using the river water for irrigation/livestock or drinking, despite testing that shows it is safe for irrigation. Does the EPA have an obligation to continue providing water or financial resources for water to the Navajo Nation indefinitely? Why or why not?

Felicia Fonseca

Northern Arizona correspondent

The Associated Press

(928) 213-5740

**From:** Harris-Bishop, Rusty [<mailto:Harris-Bishop.Rusty@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 22, 2015 2:08 PM  
**To:** Fonseca, Felicia  
**Cc:** Press  
**Subject:** Inquiry re water tanks on Navajo

Hi Felicia:

I'm following up on your inquiry regarding water tanks delivered to the Navajo Nation for agricultural use, and I'm not sure from our database if you've been responded to. Here is our statement on the tanks issue:

### **EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Response - Navajo Nation Operations**

#### *Ongoing work:*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is committed to working collaboratively with the Navajo Nation on response activities related to the Gold King Mine release. Since August 13, EPA has had a full-time liaison officer to the Navajo Nation's Command Center in Window Rock to discuss and plan short- and long-term EPA assistance to the tribe.

EPA continues to arrange for hay deliveries for livestock on the Navajo Nation, to hold regular calls with tribal officials for sharing and evaluating water sampling data, and to provide other technical assistance to the tribe aimed at restoring San Juan River irrigation canal water for agricultural purposes. EPA is also engaging with the Navajo Nation regarding the federal claims process.

On August 20, all EPA field personnel working on the Navajo Nation, including teams sampling the San Juan River, returned to the Farmington Incident Command Post (ICP) in order to re-evaluate further response activities and to ensure secure field operations. EPA has numerous personnel in the Durango, Colo., area command post and EPA contract personnel continue to conduct water and sediment sampling in Lake Powell.

### Agricultural water tank:

EPA is working with the Navajo Nation to investigate complaints related to one agricultural water tank that was delivered to the Shiprock area.

Following the Gold King Mine release, which impacted the San Juan River, an EPA contractor supplied thirteen tanks for watering service within the Navajo Nation. Nine of these tanks were deployed in the Shiprock area; EPA did not administer water distribution from those tanks. The tanks were sourced from the water division of Triple S Trucking Company, an Aztec, N.M.-based tanker truck company. EPA contracted for the tanks to be cleaned and inspected prior to use at Shiprock. Water distributed by Triple S tanks was provided by the Bloomfield Utility Department, the municipal water utility company for the City of Bloomfield, N.M.

EPA is examining the records related to the tank and working with the tribe to remove the tanks from the staging sites.

### River water quality:

Based on EPA surface water data collected following the August 5, 2015 Gold King Mine release, San Juan River water quality in the Navajo Nation has returned to pre-event conditions. This determination is based on a review of water quality data collected from August 7-16, 2015 at EPA's sampling point near Hogback, N.M. Data results from sediment samples taken from August 10-15 show that metal concentrations are below the risk-screening levels for recreation.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye had a productive phone conversation on August 19 to review water quality data. During that discussion, the President indicated that the Navajo Nation may re-open the San Juan River for irrigation purposes as soon as this weekend. It was also agreed on that call that Friday, August 21, would be the last day for EPA to supply water for agricultural use on the Navajo Nation.

EPA will continue to work with the Navajo Nation in the coming weeks to ensure that a long-term monitoring plan for the San Juan River is implemented.

For additional information on the EPA Gold King Mine release response:

<http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Rusty



**Rusty Harris-Bishop** • Superfund Project Manager • Communications Liaison • US Environmental Protection Agency •

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